

[Marsz, marsz, Dabrowski]

File

N.H.F.W.P.#1801 [?] New Hampshire 1938-9

Julia M.Sample Subject: Living Lore [[?]?]

Marsz, marsz, Dabrowski

Z siemi [wioskiej?] do polskiej

Wolnosc, dawne [haslo?] haso

Jeszcze w nas nie zgaslo?] zgaso .

Oh, it was good to hum and clean, to clean the way she liked to do it. First one room all clean, then shut it up and start cleaning the next one. No Mrs. Kendall to-day to say, 'Katherine, Katherine, here's another little job for you' before she had more than started the last little job. With each MARSZ, MARSZ the mop was pushed a bit more vigorously, as if she really were marching to freedom and victory.

Now she was in the kitchen and there on the table lay the seventy-five cents all ready for her when she had finished her day's work. She stopped humming. "Poor Mrs. Kendall, she seek, ver? seek in hospi tal. Me, take care of son. Good man but no can keep house. Me make nice, scrub, clean, dust." Katherine picks up the money and puts it down again. Thereby reassuring herself that it was real and at the same time encouraging herself to go on and finish the cleaning. Not until / she had dressed for the street and [?] was ready to leave would she put the money in her purse. She smiled, "Good man, like mother, no forget the money. All time have money on table soon as come. No wait 'till finish." Still

Library of Congress

thinking of Mrs. Kendall and her cold in the chest Katherine shakes her head, " S She reech, ver' ree reech . Son say her room all alone, nurses, doctors. She ver' reech."

She once more takes up the tune MARSZ, MARSZ, DABROWSKI as she opens the window to draw in the clothes. Glancing at the clock Katherine realizes that if she hurries she can roll the clothes for 2 ironing and reach home early. She smiles. No Mrs. Kendall say today 'Katherine, Katherine here's another little job for you.

This fine looking Polish woman steps along the street briskly, she reminds one of spring, altho the streets are covered with snow. It is her walk, springy / like the robin's little run and hop. Also with the robin's bright darting glance about her. As she walks she plans her supper. To-night she will have time to make pierogi, she will put apples in them not cabbage. Jan, her husband, does not relish cabbage. He is always saying, "No cabbage. Cabbage, cabbage, all time cabbage in Poland, not here. Me sick of cabbage."

She sighs and hurries a bit, she hopes he will not be drunk tonight. When having only part time work he had acquired the habit of hanging out at the T.K.K. Each morning he had to have one beer, one whiskey. Now he worked in Nashua. His friend Josef had a car and took him with two others down and back every day. They always had time to stop in the morning for their one beer and one whiskey. By speeding Josef sometimes managed to return them to Manchester early. Then the evening one beer, one whiskey turned into several. "Perhaps," she thinks, "no speed to-night, plenty snow." If they did stop she would have to listen to him all evening [naranguing?] about the church or about how smart she thinks she is. Or perhaps he would slam the door and go back to the T.K.K. There he would find a ready ear and say, "My woman, don't know what's matter with her. Has roof over head and food, but want money, money all the time. [/?] tell her get job, work, children not little, no need money."

Katherine suffered most when he talked about the church. She could get work, she could earn money to give to the church and the organizations to which she belonged. But she

Library of Congress

could not persuade nor threaten him into going to church. No prayer, no talk seemingly had any effect. Jan would shout, "This a free country, this America. Everybody 3 do as damm please. Me? I belong to Pope. My name in Pope's book. Right here (he always pounds the table at this point), here in Pope's book. I belong to Pope, no change, no matter--no church; me baptised, name right there in Pope's book. Make no difference, no church. Me? I belong to Pope."

With another sigh she starts climb climbing the steep flight of stairs to the top floor. In spite of her day's work at the Kendall's and her early morning's work in her own tenement Katherine climbs without a trace of fatigue. As always it pleased her to note how much cleaner this top floor hall was than the others. Yes, she would be clean even though they were living in a squalid house. It is true they once lived in a house with plenty of room, plenty of money for food and the children's clothes, plenty of ground for a garden. But rarely did Katherine think of this past. Isn't she in America? Isn't she living in a free country? Hasn't she running water and electric lights? Hasn't her older daughter married well and her younger daughter a job? Then there's Henry her son, a smart boy in school. Her face brightens. Yes this is America!

The door is unlocked so she knows Henry is home from school. She is greeted affectionately by this blonde boy, such a contrast to her darkness. He has been waiting for her to come home. After a little chatter he leaves for confession with a "Good-bye, mamó." While Katherine prepares supper, by paring apples, [mixing?] dough for those triangles of deliciousness - pierogi; she thinks about Henry and the time he was born. Not for Henry had she the big fat mid-wife. No indeed, Henry was born in the hospital. No longer did she fear the hospital. She could now understand what they said and they could understand her. She thinks, "Now diff'rent. Last time "Beeg, fat woman take baby, lady get seek, ver' 4 seek, blud poisin, she die. All Polish ladies say, no more have fat woman. Everybody go to hospi tal."

Library of Congress

Supper is ready. The table is set with each plate, cup, saucer, fork and spoon carefully turned bottom side up. Henry is back. Frances is home from work. Now she hears Jan coming up the stairs. Immediately she knows that to-night he is sober. Everything is alright, they can be glad. Perhaps he will stay home and they will have a little game of cards.